

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 906

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to commend Dr. Joseph E. Johnson for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize an honorable individual who has selflessly given of his wisdom and experience for the benefit of all Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Joseph E. Johnson is a much beloved Tennessean who has performed extraordinary service for the University of Tennessee and the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson has spent his entire career in public service, devoting nearly a half century to improving education, research, and public service at the University of Tennessee, as well as working tirelessly in the administration of the late Governor Buford Ellington; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary career, Dr. Johnson has distinguished himself as a tireless worker, a wise leader, and a respected public servant with impeccable integrity; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson graciously agreed to come out of retirement in August 2003 at the behest of the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees to step in as Interim President when the university was in need of stable and honest leadership; and

WHEREAS, he quickly and efficiently restored equilibrium, serving by example as an upstanding, hard working, and knowledgeable chief executive who loves the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, his education and training prepared him well for his future responsibilities, beginning in his birthplace of Vernon, Alabama, and graduation from Hueytown High School, continuing through his undergraduate education at Birmingham-Southern College, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science in 1955, and his selection to Phi Beta Kappa honor society, Phi Kappa Phi, and Omicron Delta Kappa; and

WHEREAS, he further prepared for what was to be a distinguished career in public service by his year-long participation in the Southern Regional Training Program in Public Administration, a selective joint offering of the University of Alabama, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, proudly answering the call to duty, Joe Johnson deferred his education for two years while he admirably served his country in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Dr. Johnson set his course for a lifetime in Tennessee when he enrolled at the University of Tennessee, earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration, and joined the university faculty as an Instructor and Research Associate in the Department of Political Science and the Bureau of Public Administration. In these teaching and research roles, he began amassing the valuable experiences that would inform his career in public life; and

WHEREAS, his talents being broadly recognized, he was recruited to Nashville, where he served in the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration in the administration of the late Governor Buford Ellington, filling positions of increasing responsibility from Budget Analyst to Director of the Budget Division and Deputy Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his outstanding service, Dr. Johnson was elevated to Executive Assistant to Governor Ellington, overseeing state budget preparation and directing a large professional staff, and yet again, increasing the considerable job knowledge that would fuel his later career; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, beloved University of Tennessee President Andrew David Holt recognized the intelligence and capability of the young Joe Johnson and recruited him to return to the University of Tennessee as Executive Assistant to the President; and

WHEREAS, he earned in 1968 a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Tennessee, preparing him further for university leadership; and

WHEREAS, through succeeding years, Dr. Johnson served in various UT Vice Presidential positions, gradually amassing the vast job knowledge that would distinguish his university service. In addition to various positions with the University in Knoxville, he moved to Memphis for three years, where he served as Chancellor of the University of Tennessee Center for the Health Sciences; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Dr. Johnson became Executive Vice President of the University of Tennessee, serving capably as the university's number two executive, managing the day-to-day activities of the institution and providing vigilant oversight; and

WHEREAS, he was elected in 1991 by the Board of Trustees to be the 19th President of the University of Tennessee, a position he filled with the utmost intelligence, energy, diligence, and with a large measure of common sense and good judgment. His encyclopedic knowledge of the institution and personal acquaintance with many of its faculty and staff, as well as with officials of state government and members of the General Assembly, made him a leader uniquely equipped to guide the university; and

WHEREAS, throughout his university service, Dr. Johnson was a special friend of the alumni, devoting thousands of hours to activities of the UT National Alumni Association and actively engaging in fund raising, personally influencing millions of dollars of gifts to the university, as well as making friends for the university throughout the nation and building his reputation as a raconteur specializing in "Auburn jokes"; and

WHEREAS, after retiring in 1999 as one of the most notable presidents in the university's history and being voted the title of President Emeritus by the Board of Trustees, Dr. Johnson continued to play an active role in the Knoxville community, serving as Chairman of Knoxville's Promise and on the boards of Home Federal Bank, the East Tennessee Foundation, the East Tennessee Diabetes Association, and the Tennessee Research and Development Center; and

WHEREAS, he also serves national organizations, including the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges and the National Association of College and University Business Officers; and

WHEREAS, as President Emeritus Dr. Johnson remained actively involved with the university, particularly its alumni and development programs, and readily consulted on matters of university business; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Dr. Johnson has been supported in the most admirable way by his family—his gracious and accomplished wife, Patricia Pinckley Johnson; their two children, Kelly and Kent; son-in-law, Bill; and most especially grandson, Tucker; and

WHEREAS, Pat Johnson, a double UT graduate, is in her own right a significant attribute to the University of Tennessee and the state of Tennessee, tirelessly attending events, nurturing friendships, and representing the university admirably; and

WHEREAS, when the call came from the Board of Trustees in August 2003, seeking an Interim President, both Dr. Joe and Pat Johnson did not hesitate to re-commit themselves to the unforgiving pace of university leadership and have fulfilled any and every obligation of the University of Tennessee throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson has restored stability and credibility to the university; strengthened its organizational infrastructure; worked with the Board of Trustees to put in place accountability measures; enthusiastically visited all parts of the university and taken part in their activities; scrupulously managed the affairs of the University of Tennessee President's Office; worked with government officials, faculty and staff, students, alumni and friends, community leaders, and others to reinforce the good reputation of the university; and most importantly, stood as an example of honesty and impeccable ethics; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson is a model of a selfless public service who has earned enormous admiration, recognition, and respect throughout Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Dr. Joseph E. Johnson for his service to the people of Tennessee throughout his career and especially thank him for coming out of retirement to serve his state and university when they needed him most.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy